be no difficulty. It is a very excellent system and was put into force when Mr. Kingsmill controlled the department. It is working very well and I think it will have a very beneficial effect. I do not know that there are any other new features in the Bill which I have not touched upon. As I said at the opening, it is more a consolidating Bill than anything else, and will remedy well-known difficulties in the present Act. The main thing sought to be enacted is that better machinery should be provided for the governing of public health generally, and more particularly for insisting upon only wholesome food being supplied to the public. There is provision for the detection of unwholesome and bad food. It is a very long Bill and one that requires careful consideration. Consequently I intend, when the second reading is carried, to ask the House to refer it to a select committee. There are a number of gentlemen here who have had large experience in health matters as Ministers, mayors and members of local boards, and I think when the Bill has been referred to a select committee, thoroughly threshed out there, and then gone through a Committee of the House, there will be a very good result.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: Clause 8 states, "The Governor may by proclamation suspend the operation of any of the provisions of this Act in any district or part thereof for any period." Is that the present law?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: That is a tremendous power. Is there anything like it in any other Act?

Hon M. L. Moss: In the Building Act.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, a similar provision exists in the Building Act. For the information of the hon. member, as I have already explained it to the House, I may say the provision in this Bill and in the Building Act is made so as to prevent certain districts being treated harshly. I will give an instance where it would be very hard to apply such provisions. Take the question of dairies. We all agree it is essential that a dairy should be thoroughly clean and that the by-laws should be carried out to the letter. At the same time there are cases where it is not necessary to apply the provision to the letter. In the case of a metropolitan dairy, which supplies a large number of customers and where there are a great many cows congregated in a small place, these conditions might apply with justice, but they would not apply in a country district. Therefore the Governor is given power to exempt certain districts of the State from the operation of certain portions of the Bill.

On motion by the *Hon. W. Kingsmill*, debate adjourned.

BILL—PORT HEDLAND-MARBLE BAR RAILWAY.

Received from the Legislative Assembly, and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 5.30 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 22nd August, 1907.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By *the Premier*: (1.) Goldfields Water Supply Administration. Report to 30th June, 1907. (2.) Plan showing Route of proposed Railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar.

QUESTION — CADET FORCE, INCREASE.

Mr. BATH asked the Premier: 1, What percentage of boys of cadet age are being trained in the cadet force? 2, What percentage of those so trained can, under the present establishment, find a place in the senior cadets to complete that training? 3, Which is the cheaper in the end: recruiting based on the cadet system, or the present erratic method of obtaining recruits? 4, What are the Premier's objections to an expansion of the cadet force in this State? 5, What steps is the Premier taking, or is it his intention to take any, to prevent the Federal Government carrying out its scheme of cadet expansion?

The PREMIER replied as follows: 1, Forty per cent. 2, Under the present establishment 10 per cent. I should like to explain that by the present establishment I mean the establishment hitherto existing, though I understand some new scheme is now being introduced by the Minister for Defence. 3. This is a question for the Defence Department to answer. I am not aware that any expense is incurred in recruiting. 4, Question of cost. It will entail an extra expenditure of £1,800 per annum, and the fact that the expressed stipulation that the cadet establishment should not be increased without the consent of the Government has been ignored by the Federal Goment. 5, The Federal Government has been advised that the State Government protests against any farther expenditure without being consulted.

QUESTION—SEWAGE FILTER BEDS. PERTH.

Mr. H. BROWN asked the Minister for Works: 1, What was the amount of the highest tender received for the effluent from the filters on Burswood Island? 2, When will he be prepared to supply? 3, Has provision been made for discontinuance of supply during the time the filters will be partially submerged?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, The original intention was to run the filtrate into the river, but an application was made to the Government for its use and it was therefore decided to call tenders, so that an opportunity might be given to everyone. Only one tender was received and no sum was offered for the filtrate. The Government is not bound to supply any particular quantity and may cease the supply at any time. 2, A small proportion may be available in 12 months. 3, As the filtrate is to be used for irrigation purposes it is extremely unlikely that any will be required during the period of flooded river.

QUESTION—RAILWAY, KATANNING-KOJONUP.

Mr. H. BROWN asked the Minister for Railways: What amount was expended by his department on the Katanning-Kojonup Railway?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: £20 18s. 0d. to the 10th August, 1907. In addition to this sum £74 0s. 5d. has been spent on equipment, and £285 11s. 2d. on ordinary maintenance, but these amounts are charged up to an authority, issued by the Public Works Department when the line was taken over by this Department.

QUESTION—MINES OFFICES, NEW.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is it his intention to erect at an early date new offices for the use of the Mines Department? 2, Does he consider the present buildings used as offices suitable for the efficient working of the department? 3, Could not economy be effected if the Mines Department had new and better office accommodation?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, The question of office accomo-

modation for several departments is under consideration by the Government. 2, No. 3, Yes.

QUESTION—SHIPPING RATES, COASTAL.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Premier : 1, Have the Government under consideration a scheme dealing with the shipping rates charged on vessels engaged in the coastal trade of this State ? 2, If so, is the scheme for a reduction of rates by subsidy, or is it the intention to engage in the shipping trade by running vessels manned by Government officials ? 3, When will the Government be prepared to place a scheme, if any, before this House for consideration ?

The PREMIER replied : The Government recognises the inequalities in the charges for freight on the North-West coast, and the whole question is now receiving Cabinet consideration with a view to securing more equitable rates.

QUESTION — CAMELS IMPORTATION, COMPENSATION.

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Premier : 1, From what vote was taken the compensation of £2,000 paid to Faiz Mahomet ? 2, Has the amount been shown on the Estimates ? 3, If not, why not ?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Sundry Grants and Services — Miscellaneous, Item 45: Awards and Law Costs. 2, This amount was included in the 1905-1906 expenditure, £3,194, under above head. 3, Answered by No. 2.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

New Member.

On motion by *the Premier*, the member for Kalgoorlie (Hon. N. Keenan) was appointed a member of the Standing Orders Committee, in room of Mr. Illingworth resigned.

BILL—PORT HEDLAND - MARBLE BAR RAILWAY.

Third reading.

The PREMIER moved—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON expressed regret that the new clause he had moved had not been passed in Committee. The Government must now be satisfied that the work of constructing the railway would be done under sweating conditions. During the debate the facts were not placed too clearly before Ministers, who urged that each Government contract contained a provision protecting the worker against sweating. That was not so. In each contract a clause provided that the worker should be paid the ruling rate existing in the district. But where there was only one contract of a certain nature in a locality, the contractor's rate, however low, became the ruling rate, and the clause was worthless. If in the North-West the Government let a contract for a building, the clause would operate, for there were other buildings in the locality and a ruling rate of wages for erecting them. But there would be no other railway in the district, and the contractor's rate, always low, would be the ruling rate. The principle applied in the metropolitan area, when the contract work in question was the only work of its kind being done. In the metropolitan sewerage works the ruling-rate clause was worthless, and a special arrangement was made with the contractors by the Minister to overcome the difficulty. For years there was great trouble as to police uniforms and conditions of tendering, various Governments providing in the specifications that the "ruling rate" must be paid to the workers. It was always found to be a sweated rate. When the Labour Government were in office they called for tenders and inserted the usual clause in the specifications as to subletting. It was set out that as soon as the tender was submitted the Government should ask the lowest tenderer what the ruling rate of wages should be for the work. He (Mr. Johnson) had dealt with the lowest tenderer for the contact in question and had asked him what was the lowest wage he intended to pay under that contract. The amount was stated, and he then informed the tenderer that that would mean a sweating wage, and said that unless it were in-

creased the contract would be given to someone else. The Government inserted in the Executive Council minute accepting the tender a paragraph stating what was a fair wage to be paid to the operators. In all such contracts it should be distinctly stated what the ruling rate of wage should be. The position would be very bad in the North-West for there would be but few men up there and the contractor would be able to sweat the men just as he liked. It had been suggested that, because there were not many men up there, there would not be the same chance of sweating; but the position was just the opposite, for the contractor would get up men to do the work and sweat them as he liked, and they would have to remain on the job for a certain time before they could get sufficient money to take them back again. This would go on while the contract lasted. Men would be taken to the job by every steamer; they would have to work for a certain time at a sweated wage and then they would throw up their work and leave. There would be no possibility of preventing sweating there. The Premier had said he would be prepared to accept the first portion of the proposed new clause and he (Mr. Johnson) would ask the Premier whether he would put it in the contract. If the minimum rate were fixed, the men would be protected so far as the daily wage was concerned. It would however give an opportunity for sweating on piecework. As a matter of fact, in every contract that the Government let for the construction of public works subletting went on. There was subletting for the painting, plastering, bricklaying and plumbing. When he was a Minister he had tried to get proof of this, and although he had been told by the very men who did the sub-contracting that it was done, he had been unable to get anybody to come forward and prove that such was the case. Consequently that clause in the contract was a dead letter. We should do something to prevent a repetition of the sweating conditions now pertaining in connection with the construction of the Coolgardie-Norseman line. On that work men were getting between four and five shillings a day on piecework, and yet there was a clause in the specifications prohibiting piecework. The whole thing wanted remodelling, and before the third reading was passed he hoped the Premier would assure the House that he would adopt in the specifications the suggested new clause. If that were done, the work would be carried out on fair conditions, instead of under the sweated conditions now existing in connection with the Coolgardie-Norseman line.

The PREMIER: While he would not withdraw from the position he took up the other evening, he would be prepared to see that a clause was inserted in the conditions of the contract for the railway, so that the workmen engaged there would be protected in the manner desired by the hon. member.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—ELECTORAL.

Debate resumed from the 1st August.

Mr. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): The Bill dealing with the administration of our Electoral Act, which has been submitted by the Attorney General, is really the machinery by which we translate into actual effect the principles of representative government to which we are committed. In Western Australia we, in common with other States of Australia and New Zealand, are committed, so far as the Legislative Assembly is concerned, to a full measure of jurisdiction on the part of the people by means of adult suffrage, and the machinery by which that is carried out is vested with considerable importance. I wish to point out to the Attorney General also that it is of even greater importance that those charged with the duty of administering the Act should be sympathetic with the principles underlying it, and should always have in view the fact that we have here in Western Australia adult suffrage, and that in administering that machinery they should place the most liberal interpretation upon the powers vested in them for

administering the Act. So far as the electoral laws are concerned, this is not the first occasion on which we have had an attempt on the part of the Minister in charge of the department to tinker with the measure, and the Attorney General seems inclined to follow the example of a previous occupant of that office, not only in respect to electoral laws but also in regard to many other measures, in thinking he is fulfilling the duties of the position by merely bringing down amending measures. I have protested against this practice session after session, and the introduction of such an enormous number of Bills dealing with the various measures we have on the statute books. From the time I first entered Parliament, session after session the members of this House have been called upon to deal with 40 or 50 amending and consolidating measures, until by the time the session is finished they do not know where they stand in regard to the legislation of the State. Particularly on this question of our electoral laws I think hon. members will agree with me that it is not so much a matter demanding an amendment of the Act as it is a question demanding some effective administration of the measure we have at the present time. I think also it is a just reason for adverse criticism of the Attorney General that he has been an occupant of that office for over 12 months and has had previous administrative office in a municipal sphere without discovering where the real defect lies so far as the Electoral Department of the State is concerned. I say that defect is purely and simply in the administration of our electoral laws. I do not wish for one moment to reflect upon the present occupant of the position of Chief Electoral Officer, for it would be premature for any hon. member either to praise or to blame him, as he has not been in the position sufficiently long to justify either. I will go farther and say that his intentions, as indicated by the returns he has issued in the papers, and the statements he has made to the House in regard to questions dealing with the Electoral Department, show an evident desire to make the Electoral Department effective by seeing that those entitled to vote are provided with the opportunity of enrolment on the electoral lists. I wish to point out that the evil influences which vitiate the administration of the electoral laws have their origin in deeper causes than the tenure of the office of Chief Electoral Officer by one gentleman or another. While it may be said that we have absolutely democratic government as far as the Assembly is concerned, we must bear in mind that has only been secured in spite of the strenuous opposition of those who have fought it here and elsewhere in Australia. However, it has been granted in spite of that, but there have crept in influences which prevent the full consummation of that democratic idea. The two traditions which are at the very root of the evils which exist so far as the Electoral Department is concerned are, firstly, that which lingers in the minds of those who have opposed adult suffrage and who contend that birth and caste entitle them to a superior position in the Government of the State; and secondly, that the possession of money gives them also the right to utilise that money in securing these advantages to birth and caste. It is a remarkable thing that whatever may be the canons of honesty and morality in such walks of life, so far as the government and contesting of elections are concerned it is regarded as a perfectly legitimate thing, one consistent with honesty and honour, to utilise the superior power of money in bribing a constituency or to use money to defeat the legitimate intentions of those who have given us democratic government. Such cases as this have occurred in Western Australia. [*Mr. Foulkes*: You do not believe in unions being able to devote their funds to political purposes then?] We are dealing with the electoral administration, and it is an altogether different thing for a union to use money in seeing that every elector who is alleged under our Constitution to have a right to participate in government is given that opportunity, than it is to use money for the purpose of preventing that from being carried

into effect. The position of affairs in Western Australia seems to show that some people think we have not done right in giving adult suffrage and in instituting pure democracy as far as the Legislative Assembly is concerned. Why do they not attack the system in a straightforward legitimate manner and use their influence to return men to Parliament to defeat the principle and go back to the old position of affairs? It is not a legitimate thing, in view of their apparent acquiescence in adult suffrage to use their money, power, and influence by underhand means to prevent the people from securing their votes on election day. It is to that I object; and it is to that evil the Attorney General, if he is in favour of adult suffrage, should direct his efforts so far as the Electoral Department is concerned. One would presume from some of the Attorney General's remarks that the 1903 Act contains such grave defects as to be insufficient to give people the opportunity of participating in elections, or to secure an intelligent reflex of their opinion in an election of members to Parliament. As to the electoral law, I say that with proper administration it is sufficient for all practical purposes; and that it is shown in the election of 1904, the first held under that Act passed in the last session before the election of 1904. Of course it was only to be expected that in the administration of a new Act, defects would be discovered; and experience has shown that in respect of all enactments brought in and given effect to in Western Australia, defects are shown in practice, amending legislation being required later to remove those defects. Hence it was only to be expected in regard to the Electoral Act of 1903 that practical experience would show where errors had crept in and where it could be amended with advantage to the whole State. But for the purpose of securing pure rolls which the Attorney General professes a desire to secure, the 1903 Act was sufficient. the only serious defect in the measure being in relation to postal voting; and the inequity of those provisions was that they enabled persons supporting one or other party to utilise the postal voting clauses in an unfair manner—in a manner which, in many instances, can only be characterised as corrupt. If that defect were removed and we had some stringent safeguard as to postal voting, I think that the 1903 Act was amply sufficient for its purpose. What I object to is the maladministration of the Act. In the first place we have had in the Electoral Department, charged with the duty of enrolling electors in various parts of the country, men who have been influenced by the tradition of which I spoke, the idea that it was absolutely wrong for every man and woman in the community to have a vote; and holding that view (although it might be the law of the country), they have used every endeavour to prevent people from being enrolled, and conseqently from exercising their right to vote on election day.

The Attorney General: Will the hon. member give an instance of an electoral officer doing that?

Mr. BATH: I can give the Minister an instance at the Menzies electorate, where some 590 electors were disfranchised owing to the fact that although claims had been put in sufficiently early, in some instances the names did not appear on the roll on election day. [*Mr. Angwin*: One hundred and twenty persons were similarly treated in East Fremantle.] I can point also to the fact—and this may account in some measure for the duplication of names on the roll—that in a number of electorates people were afraid to make out transfers because from experience they knew the transfer forms would never be filled and they would not have their names on the roll on election day. I know of men in the Northam electorate with names on the roll, men who had never shifted out of the electorate, who when they went to the polling-booth on election day, thinking they would be able to record their votes, found their names had been struck off the roll. That probably supplied the reason why many persons, knowing their names appeared on one roll, refused to take out transfers when shifting to another electorate,

fearing there was great probability of finding their names would not be on any roll at election time. Another thing which caused a lot of confusion was that for considerable periods people have been unable to ascertain whether their names were on the roll or not; and much of the duplication was caused by men in that position filling in claim-forms to make sure their names should be on the roll. If we had proper facilities, and if the Minister controlling the department and the officers under him recognised that every man and woman had a right to a vote we should have opportunities for exercising that right, we would not have those evils we have seen in connection with the Act of 1903. It was through fear of being defrauded of their right to vote that many persons put in claims; and in many instances this accounts for the duplication of names on the roll. So far as this electoral measure is concerned, I wish to point out that instead of the Attorney General showing anxiety to make the measure one that shall facilitate people getting on the roll and exercising their votes on election day, the whole Bill from beginning to end seems to be conceived in a spirit of suspicion, conceived in the idea that the whole constituency of Western Australia is corrupt; that unless the measure is filled from beginning to end with restrictions, the electors throughout Western Australia are going to take opportunities of voting corruptly by voting in constituencies other than those in which they are entitled, or going to do something that is detrimental to the government of the State. In the present measure the Attorney General has copied from the New Zealand Act a number of clauses almost word for word; and I wish to say that in doing so he has departed from a practice which has always obtained, that is where a clause is taken from an existing statute there should be in the marginal note some reference to the source from which it is taken. If for no other reason than that it facilitated examination by hon. members, that practice should have been continued.

Mr. Taylor: It is the usual practice.

The Attorney General: It is not the practice in other places.

Mr. BATH: It has been the usual practice in Western Australia at least, as the Minister will see if he looks up previous procedure. And it seems to me that it is departed from in this instance to cover up the fact that while the Attorney General has copied from the New Zealand Act a number of provisions and inserted them in this Bill, he has carefully avoided copying from that measure any clauses or subclauses of a liberal nature. New Zealand has one of the most liberal electoral Acts in Australasia, and the result is that New Zealand has the purest elections in Australasia and has a greater percentage of electors enrolled and voting at elections than in any other part of Australia. From time to time we have heard members in this House, we have seen it mentioned in the Press, we have known members of the National Liberal League and politicians throughout Australasia, publicly deploring the fact that the electors do not avail themselves of their privileges, that when election day comes only a small proportion of the electors, little more than one half, record their votes. I say that is due to illiberal administration and to the fact that instead of providing facilities, efforts seem to be directed to preventing people from recording their votes. In New Zealand, where they have a liberal Act and liberal administration, they have a greater proportion not only of people entitled to vote, but also in the number of those actually voting on election day.

The Attorney General: What portions of the New Zealand Act does the hon. member say are more liberal than this Bill?

Mr. BATH: I will refer to some of them as I go along. In the first place, we have a provision in this Bill for the excluding from the voting lists of the State those in receipt of charitable relief. That is altogether different from the practice which obtains either in respect of the Federal Parliament or, so far as I can remember, in New Zealand. I think it absolutely cruel that men and women who have done the pioneering work of Western Australia in its darker

days should now, merely because in their old age they are thrown on the resources of the State and have to accept charitable relief, be deprived of their right to a vote: it is a relic of barbarism rather than an evidence of enlightenment. And I hope before this measure passes, the House will throw out this provision. I would like members to note the fact that while the Bill proposes to exclude those in receipt of charitable relief from exercising the right to vote, no mention whatever is made of those who are pensioners on the State's bounty. A considerable number of men and women in this State are receiving benefits from the State; but the Attorney General has made no effort to exclude them from voting, though the unfortunates in our old men's and old women's homes are excluded by the provisions of this Bill. If the Attorney General calls that a liberal provision, it seems to me his idea of liberality needs great change.

The Attorney General: I said it would not apply to old-age pensioners.

Mr. Taylor: But it would apply to men like Mr. Wilbur.

Member: He is not in that position now.

Mr. BATH: The provision governing the issue of rolls says they are to be printed and issued when the Minister directs. That is one of the reasons why in 1903 the people were not given a fair chance under the present Act. As I have said, electors did not know when rolls would be issued; for months and even years at a time no rolls were issued, and consequently people were unable to ascertain whether, after claims had been filed, their names had been placed on the roll, and in order to make sure in some cases new claims were filled in so as to establish their right to be registered. In New Zealand, New South Wales, and Queensland, the rolls must be issued at specified periods. In New Zealand the roll is issued on the1st April or the 15th April in each year; and in the other States named provision is also made for issuing the rolls annually. The matter is not left to the whim of Minister, who may be inclined to maladministration so far as electoral laws are concerned; but the electors can rely on being able to see the roll on a specified date. Then we have a provision in this Bill that supplementary rolls issued prior to a general election—and, by the way, a supplementary roll is prepared prior to a by-election as well as a general election—such roll shall be printed "if practicable." We all know what "if practicable" means in the mind of a Minister who is not anxious to liberally interpret our electoral law; "when practicable" means that "it may not be practicable;" and the result is that at a general election or a by-election many electors are absolutely disfranchised. In New Zealand provision is made for the issue of supplementary rolls at specific dates of the year, and provision is also made, when a general election of by-election occurs, for the issue of a supplementary roll containing the names inserted on that roll right to the issue of the writ. [*Mr. Foulkes*: Have they any system of checking claims that may be sent in before a general election?] I will deal with that question when I come to it. Now, dealing with the manner of preparing new rolls, it is said that this shall be prescribed by the regulations. The Electoral Act is a machinery Act, and where we have a machinery Act the provisions for giving it effect should be in the measure. We do not want a machinery Act, and the machinery in connection with it transferred to regulations. We want an electoral law the people can understand; so that they may know that all its provisions are contained within its covers, and so that there can be no uncertainty. The Bill goes on to say that new rolls may be prepared in the manner specified, and that an electoral census may be made when the Governor directs. We do not want it left to the Governor, which really means the Executive Council; we want to know when the new roll is issued, and that it is not issued at the whim of the Minister. We want it apart altogether from the Minister. We want electors to realise that there will be no uncertainty so far as the issue of that roll is concerned, or the taking of the electoral census. The provision goes on farther to say that the result of the census shall

alone be used in preparing new rolls. I can give one or two instances of the injustice that will obtain if this is in the Bill. During the course of the recent census, one of the canvassers of the Electoral Department called at a house in the metropolitan area, and after enrolling the mistress of the house he wanted to know if there were any servants or employees on the premises. He was asked why he wanted to know that, and he said "I want to enrol them," and the lady absolutely refused to allow them to be enrolled—in one case a maid servant and a groom—and she gave the gratuitous information that she did not believe in servants having votes. In another case, though that reason was not advanced the lady refused to allow the electoral canvasser to enrol the servant, because she said she could not have her interfered with in the course of her service. [*Mr. Foulkes* : That is all hearsay evidence.] Those are cases where the canvasser had these experiences, they are not hearsay, and if they are multiplied to any extent, it shows that in preparing new rolls on a census only a considerable number of people will be disfranchised.

The Attorney General : Does the hon. member contend that the electoral roll is to be on the census only ?

Mr. BATH : It says so.

The Attorney General : If the hon. member will merely read one solitary clause he may create that impression.

Mr. BATH : Then we have the provision in regard to claim forms. Here we have a reversion to the law in force prior to the 1903 Act. It says in this Bill that claim forms have to be witnessed by certain specified persons. It is a proposal which will absolutely militate against the enrolment of a considerable number of electors. In the 1903 Act the claim form had merely to be signed by the claimant wishing to be enrolled. The old system which obtained prior to 1903, and which it is proposed to bring into force again under this Bill, means that unless a man is able to leave his work and go round and chase a justice of the peace, a school teacher or a civil servant, he is absolutely prevented from getting his name on the roll. What need is there for a restriction of this nature ? If the Attorney General is sincere in his desire to see electors enrolled, it is absolutely preposterous to place such a provision in an electoral measure of this kind. If the Attorney General had adopted the New Zealand system one need not complain. In the New Zealand Act it is provided that in addition to other persons, justices of the peace, school teachers and civil servants, the claim form can be witnessed by an elector. If this provision were made there might not be so much complaint about it, but I fail to see the necessity for anyone witnessing a claim form. The Minister for Works is grinning in his usual asinine manner, With his experience of elections at Fremantle one can understand his having suspicions of those supporting him in his election ; but my experience of elections in New South Wales and Western Australia is that the bulk of the population, if they get their names on the roll for the district in which they are situated, are perfectly satisfied with having the privilege of voting and of exercising their votes when the election day comes round. Any proposal seeking to put a barrier in their way ; anything, that for party purposes seeks, by underhand methods to exclude these people from having their votes, is altogether opposed to the supposed liberal constitution we have in Western Australia.

Mr. Foulkes : No one wishes to exclude them.

Mr. BATH : Then why do they want to put such a provision in the Bill, unless they want to do that ?

The Minister for Works : Because there are certain people who do not mind how many rolls they are on.

Mr. BATH: Of course the National Political League, which supports the Minister for Works, may be expert in that matter, but I am only speaking of the bulk of the electors who merely want their names recorded on the rolls, and the right to exercise their franchise. Then again we have the provision that it must be an essential feature in a claim that the number of the house is to be put on the claim form, else the claim is rejected as in-

formal. It is a provision that can only benefit those who have money to organise an electorate, to map out all the streets and send their canvassers to the houses. So far as having a complete roll is concerned, I fail to see the advantage of such a provision. I have no reason to dispute that it may be necessary to have some reasonable address so far as the streets of the cities are concerned, but to absolutely exclude a claim because the number of the house is not on it is another of those devious plans for disfranchising people.

Mr. Foulkes : It is to identify people, to prevent people voting when they have no right to vote.

Mr. BATH: This second-reading debate will not be closed by my remarks. The hon. member will have an opportunity of speaking afterwards.

Mr. Foulkes: I beg your pardon.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member must not interrupt.

Mr. BATH : The Attorney General points out, in regard to objections, where he has adopted provisions from New Zealand, but he has failed to include the more liberal provisions. He has evidently copied one portion of the New Zealand Act word for word, but while he makes provision that it is essential that the electoral registrar shall, when making objections against any claim, state the ground for his objection, he allows any irresponsible elector to lodge an objection against a claim being admitted without stating the grounds for his objection. That is only opening the way to those organisations who want to deprive electors of votes ; all they have to do is to go and lodge a shilling and say they object to a claim being enrolled, and they put the man to the expense of coming in and having his case heard before a resident magistrate. Very often where the man is at work during the time fixed for the hearing, the man is unable to be present, and he has to submit to his name being struck off, though possibly there is no logical objection to his name being on the roll. If the registrar, a man supposed to be an impartial officer, is compelled to state the grounds for his objection against a claim being enrolled, it is all the more necessary that an irresponsible elector who is given the same right of objection should also state his grounds on the form of objection he lodges. The same provision obtains in regard to objections to enrolment. The registrar, if he objects to the enrolment of a name, has to state his grounds for objecting, but so far as the irresponsible elector is concerned, all he has to do is to lodge a shilling, and send in a form stating that he objects to the enrolment of so-and-so. In New Zealand they have a provision for objections, but they have also a provision that the objector must state the grounds for his objection, and that this must be submitted to the man whose claim is objected to. Then we have a provision in regard to the issue of the writ, and the Attorney General has retained the section of the 1903 Act providing that no claim can be registered to entitle a man to vote unless the claim has been put in 14 days before the issue of the writ. We all know the experience in the Menzies electorate, and in a lesser degree in many electorates of the State. When the dissolution took place in 1905 there was a sudden rush, the Executive Council was held, and the Governor was summoned to meet on Saturday ; writs were rushed out at the earliest possible moment on the Monday or a few days after, and the result was that 540 persons fully entitled to vote, who had submitted their names in the Menzies electorate, were not entitled to vote. [*Mr. Taylor* : Hence the Minister's return.] So far as the provision is concerned we all know that it rests on the Government in power at the time the election is held as to when the writ is issued. The Government can fix it early or late, and if there is a number of claims lodged and the Government think that the enrolment of these claims will make it awkward for them, by the issue of that writ and the provision of 14 days before the issue of the writ, they can absolutely deprive these people from recording votes on polling day. There should be a provision by which claims can be lodged and enrolled and the persons entitled to vote for a specified time after the issue of the writ ; or alternatively, there should be a provision for

notice of the issue of the writ. We all know that a number of electors leave it until some time of excitement, or until there is a probability of an election, before they put their names on the roll. It is not so much a case of their indifference to the exercise of their privilege, but it is due to the fact that the ordinary everyday concerns absorb their minds, and they only seek to protect themselves, to secure their rights, when the opportunity is likely to occur in the immediate future of exercising those rights. And if the members of the House and Ministers are anxious that we should have for every adult the right to vote and to record a vote on election day, if they do not want to disfranchise electors they must make some provision by which there is a specified term, when an election is going to be held, during which electors can file their claims, and effect transfers, and have their names enrolled so as to vote on the election day. We have other provisions here in regard to the limitation of election expenses, and so far as this provision is concerned it is absolutely absurd. Either we should have some reasonable attempt to administer these provisions or we should have them wiped out of the Act altogether. This Bill provides the same as is provided in the 1903 Act, that for the Legislative Assembly no candidate's expenses shall exceed £100 and for the Legislative Council a candidate's election expenses shall not exceed £500. There is not one member of the House who does not know that these provisions are flagrantly violated, by those who have the money, on election day, and there is no attempt at investigation. All that has to be done is that the candidate within certain specified days after the election has to file a statement of his election expenses and put it in. That is all that is heard of it.

Mr. Johnson : And he need not do that.

Mr. BATH : It has been violated at every election since it was embodied on the statute book, and it might just as well be a dead letter, outside the covers of the Act for all the good it is. If we are going to retain it then some attempt should be made to make the provision effective and to administer it. In some elections where it has been well known and conclusively proved that the amount was considerably over the sum specified in assisting the candidate in his election, the excuse has been made that it was not the candidate who expended the money but his friend. Everyone knows what a subterfuge that is. In the New Zealand measure that is provided against. It not only says the candidate himself, but no person on his behalf shall expend more than the amount provided in the Act. In Western Australia we should have that provision and more effective administration of the provision, or it should be wiped out of our Act altogether. There is also a provision in this measure which in the light of the Northam and North Fremantle and Fremantle elections is one of the strongest things I have ever seen embodied in a Bill. It says that no declaration of public policy or promise of public action shall be deemed bribery or undue influence. And while we have every small offence which could be possibly committed on an election day placed in the category of bribery or corrupt practices or illegal influence, the making of a promise on the eve of an election is carefully excluded from this provision by Clause 181. What is the position in regard to the Northam election for instance ? A Minister here, the person charged with the administration of the finances, who has to adjust them and is responsible to the House for the administration of the finances of the State, says that a certain sum of money is to be used in reducing or attempting to wipe away the deficit. Another Minister sends a wire to an electorate on the eve of an election and says the money is to be used to reduce their freights on the railways. And if such a Minister or such Ministers were impeached on the matter, all they would have to do would be to point to this clause and say it was a declaration of public policy or the promise of a political action. The same thing applies to the promise of the Minister for Works in his famous red leaflet on the Fremantle election, and the promise of a dock on the eve of the election at North Fremantle. Everyone knows that there is no member of an Opposition

party who can secure this advantage because of the fact that he is in Opposition; he is absolutely precluded from making any declaration of his intention to spend funds on a public work. It is only one of a Cabinet, charged with the administration of affairs, who can make such a promise to the electors. And while we have such an absurd clause in the Bill we have placed in the Bill all the minor offences which can be committed and which are punishable. One can admire the ingenuity of the Attorney General, while one cannot commend that high sense of honour which induces him to descend to include this provision. In regard to postal voting I see the Attorney General has made some effort to restrict the postal voting provisions to prevent undue influence. In the second part of the subclause there are still some opportunities for undue influence in this direction. I would much rather see the Attorney General adopt the provision for absent voting which is contained in the New Zealand Act than to continue our provision in the present law. If he wishes to give these facilities at the same time he tries to avoid the abuse of them, I commend the New Zealand provision as far preferable than that in the Bill before us. We now come to what is a fad of either the Attorney General or some of his colleagues. I refer to the provision for preferential voting. And the clauses which are inserted are not to provide machinery for our existing Constitution or redistribution of seats, but for some contingency which may arise in the future. It is on this ground primarily that I take objection to the insertion of the provision for proportional voting and the clauses dealing with the multiple electorates in the Bill. We have no right in dealing with a machinery Bill to provide for something which is not on the statute book and may not be placed on the statute book.

Mr. Walker: And which means altering the statute book.

Mr. BATH: Which means in order to give effect to this, to alter the statute book in the future. There is a probability in the future when we are dealing with the redistribution of seats, that it will be urged as a reason for introducing dual or multiple electorates in that redistribution that members of this Parliament have included certain provisions in the machinery to provide for that contingency. If we make this machinery effective for carrying on the existing Constitution we shall be doing enough without providing for redistribution in the future. It is better to direct attention to provide a liberal measure to administer our present Constitution rather than provide for contingencies in the future. I wish to say also that before we adopt or embody any system for proportional or preferential voting, some adequate and mature deliberation on the part of the Assembly as to the best system to adopt should take place. Here the Bill commits us to one system, and there are at least half a dozen systems of proportional or preferential voting advocated in various countries, and before we commit ourselves to any one system we ought to have the most minute or careful consideration of those proposals. In regard to proportional voting, while I do not wish to discuss it at length, because it has no right within the covers of the Bill, I desire to say, where a provision was made say for five members to be returned for one constituency, an elector voting for these five has to bracket candidates advocating one particular point of view, one, two, three, four, and five, and he has to make all the difference in his preference between some couple of them from one to five. That is not just. It may be a cunning move, but it is not a just way of dealing with it. Where an elector is asked to vote for five candidates, he should have the right to give equal weight to the five candidates carrying his principles. That is the only just way of doing it. But here in this proposal is a cunning method not of securing the wish of the people in their first preference, but trying by a side wind to secure the return of those otherwise in the minority so far as the first preference is concerned. Then again if we could rely on electors, after having exhausted their votes, those who advocated their own particular political principles, in giving

their votes to others opposed to them according to the merits of candidates, there might be some argument in favour of the system. But the Attorney General knows as well as I and others do that an Opposition candidate who is known to be an able man the fact of his ability may be the very reason why he should be put down the list. Otherwise an elector having exhausted his own preference will absolutely be compelled to give a vote with the possibility of having a candidate returned to whom he is absolutely opposed, and who would with whatever ability he may possess, go in and fight against the very political principles which he held dear. That is not the system to commend itself to any democratic community; therefore we should try to give the people an opportunity, so far as their political divisions are concerned, of returning members who will support their political principles, and not by a side wind secure their votes for someone diametrically opposed to them. As far as Western Australia is concerned, the best possible system to adopt and one of the best practical results would be to retain our system of single electorates with equitable distribution according to electors, and make a system of second ballot similar to that in force in most continental countries. It is one which absolutely secures in the final selection the return of the candidate who has a majority of votes and the return of the candidate who has the first preference accorded by the electors, and not the third or fourth preference of the electors. Another objection and a fatal one, that is that the system, although it may have, from a theoretical point of view, argument to support it, will in practice result inevitably in the creation of factions in Parliament; because it will mean that a number of conflicting parties, having perhaps some one principle in view, will each be able to secure the return of one member; and therefore we shall have in the House twenty or thirty parties instead of two or three. We shall have a number of contending factions in Parliament, and instead of doing practical work, instead of despatching public business with expedition, we shall have each of the contending factions advocating its own particular fad, and taking up time without transacting any real business. If the factions sink their differences and unite for some purposes, in order that one party may carry on public business, that party can only secure a majority from the large number of factions by giving them some concessions, by making secret arrangements, by cabals and all sorts of underhand methods of securing a majority; and instead of purifying parliamentary government, the scheme will have absolutely the oposite effect; at least, I am satisfied that will be the result. And I know from reading criticisms of the system as adopted in Tasmania, that has been the result there. A Bill of this kind is essentially one which will excite much discussion in Committee, and I have no desire to discuss it farther on the second reading. All I desire the House to remember is that Western Australia is definitely committed to the principle of universal suffrage, the principle that every man or woman over the age of twenty-one shall be entitled to enrolment as an elector, and entitled to facilities for voting. If we believe in that principle, it should be our aim to pass such a liberal measure as will give the people those facilities. If any members are opposed to adult suffrage, and believe that birth or caste or the possession of money should entitle some electors to greater privileges than others, then the proper method is to come straightforwardly to this Assembly and try to have their wishes carried into effect. But I would urge on members, and more particularly on the Attorney General, that it is not an honourable procedure, not a procedure in the interests of democracy, to try to defeat adult suffrage, to try to defeat the democratic basis of our government, to try to disfranchise electors in the community, in order to secure some temporary advantage.

As to Adjournment.

Mr. Walker: As no one seems to be ready to reply to the Leader of the Opposition, I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Unless some reply be made, I do not feel inclined to proceed.

The Attorney General: I am not in a position to accept this motion. The Bill has been for a considerable time before members.

Mr. Bath: You cannot discuss the adjournment.

The Attorney General: If not, I should like to know by what rule was the mover entitled to do so.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not strictly in order to discuss a motion for adjournment, but it has always been a privilege of Ministers to give a few reasons against it.

The Attorney General: I suppose we have some real fair play in the House, and apparently that rule is subject to extraordinary exceptions.

Mr. SPEAKER: A Minister has certain privileges.

The Attorney General: However, I have nothing farther to say, except that the Bill has been before the House for a long period, and it is about time we made some forward step.

Mr. Taylor: Why do you not reply to the Leader of the Opposition?

The Attorney General: I will reply if you like.

Motion put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	.. .. ..	16
Noes	.. .. ..	24
Majority against	..	8

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Barnett
Mr. Bath	Mr. Brebber
Mr. Eddy	Mr. H. Brown
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Butcher
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Holman	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Horan	Mr. Davies
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Scaddan	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Stuart	Mr. Gull
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Underwood	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Walker	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Ware	Mr. Male
Mr. Troy (*Teller*).	Mr. Mitchell
	Mr. Monger
	Mr. N. J. Moore
	Mr. S. F. Moore
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. Veryard
	Mr. Layman (*Teller*).

Motion (adjournment) thus negatived.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

As to Committee Stage.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL moved—

That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair for the purpose of considering the Bill in Committee.

Mr. Bath had a long list of amendments prepared, and had been waiting till the second-reading debate was finished to get them on the Notice Paper.

The Attorney General: At what clause did they begin?

Mr. Bath: At the interpretation clause. If amendments were put in too early, the whole list had to be printed every day on the Notice Paper, at considerable expense.

The Attorney General: Had the hon. member any amendment before Clause 16? The prior clauses were purely formal.

Mr. Bath had an amendment to Clause 4. He appealed to the Attorney General to facilitate business. Members were repeatedly requested to put amendments on the Notice Paper, so that Ministers might understand what amendments were proposed. He was only facilitating discussion.

The Attorney General had only intended to deal with the preliminary clauses, which he considered non-contentious; but as the hon. member wished to amend the interpretation clause, he would ask him to put his amendments on the Notice Paper, so that the Bill could, if opportunity arose, be discussed next Tuesday. He withdrew the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

MOTION—WICKEPIN RAILWAY PROJECT, TO INQUIRE.

Debate resumed from the previous day, on the motion by *Mr. Butcher*, to appoint a special board to report on the best route for a spur railway to suit the farmers of the Wickepin Agriculture Area, in accordance with a petition presented by Mr. G. S. F. Cowcher.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE (Katanning): We have heard from the mover of the motion the reason why the petition has been presented. I think it is recognised that all interested in the construction of a railway through a district such as this are perfectly within their rights in presenting a petition to Parliament asking for farther information in regard to the project, but it rests with members as to whether they are likely to agree to the prayer of the petition. I am desirous of assisting the people in this locality, and I have taken the opportunity of going fully into the question from both sides; because, though we are only dealing with one petition, there are facts put forward by the other petition, that which was referred to last night by the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor). I was rather disappointed that the route did not go as far north as I expected it would in the first instance; but after making inquiries in regard to the matter, I found that there were obstacles in the way in regard to grades. I know the country, I have been over it many times, and I can quite believe it would be practically impossible to obtain the ruling grades required on this railway by taking it to the north as was at first proposed. The country to the north is of an undulating character with deep gullies, and to build a line in that direction would mean that very heavy earthworks would be required if we were to have the ruling grades of one in 80 that are needed. However, it is unfortunate that the line cannot go farther to the north, because then it would be a more advantageous line to the people on the Wickepin area; but the same objection that arises in regard to going farther north on the route running out from Narrogin might also obtain in regard to the Cuballing route, because there would be the same difficulties to overcome, and it would be a more circuitous route without any great advantage being gained. That point, however, does not weigh so much with me as two other things, the first being the original idea with regard to the Collie-Narrogin Railway, that it should be built with the ultimate object of connecting with some point on the Eastern Railway for the purpose of opening up the country, and also for the carriage of coal in the future. Though that may be a long way off, as the Leader of the Opposition said—in fact the hon. member looked upon it as a wild-cat scheme—at the same time, in my opinion, this will gradually come about and this railway should be built in a direct line with that object in view. [Mr. Johnson interjected.] It is easy to alter the grades if necessary, but with the first object in view, the grades have been kept easy over this route from Narrogin as far as the survey is concerned in the direction of the Eastern Railway. I am anxious to see the line continued, and would rather see it in the direction now proposed than see it branch out from a point eleven and a-half miles farther down the line. But with all this in my mind I was desirous of giving the people who are petitioning from Cuballing and Wickepin the opportunity of obtaining more information, and I have been in communication with the leading spirit of the movement, Mr. Reynolds, a gentleman who has interested himself very much in this matter, and in communication with others who have interested themselves, and I have discussed the matter with them. A few weeks ago I suggested that the Government might send out an officer, or two or three officers selected from different departments. I made the suggestion to those gentlemen at Cuballing. My idea was to have somebody from the Agricultural Department acquainted with agriculture, the Engineer-in-Chief, and an officer from the Railway Department; the first to give information as to the capabilities of the country, the second as to the engineering difficulties, and the third as to the possibilities of the country from a traffic standpoint. When discussing the matter with these gentlemen at Cuballing I asked them whom they would suggest, and they suggested Mr. Paterson, the Manager of the Agricultural Bank, the Engineer-in-Chief, and Mr. Short, the Chief Traffic Manager of

the railways, now the Acting Commissioner of Railways. Evidently the Government were not agreeable to this, but they have obtained a report, which was read to the House last night, from Mr. Paterson, Mr. Muir, the Chief Engineering Surveyor, and Mr. Stoddart, the officer originally sent up; and their report distinctly states that they are of opinion that the line should be built as surveyed. I ask members to take notice more particularly of Mr. Paterson's statement, because it was the wish of the people at Cuballing that he should be asked to report. The member for Gascoyne asks whether they inspected the country. If there is one man who knows that country thoroughly, it is Mr. Paterson; he has travelled through and through it and knows all about it, because he had to deal with applications personally—[*Mr. Bath*: Not latterly]—in the early stages of settlement. It is only four years since he relinquished personal inspection of these applications. He knows the country thoroughly, and as he has given attention to the matter it rather relieves my mind; because I was in doubt, I thought we should have had a thorough inquiry, and that there should be good grounds advanced for making the starting point at Narrogin, though the opposite might be claimed by those supporting the Narrogin route. As to making a through line from Collie to the Eastern Railway, the idea was endorsed by the Labour Government who carried on the work of the building of the Collie-Narrogin line under the direction of the then Minister for Works. That work has been carried on with the ultimate object of carrying coal to the goldfields; it may be in the very distant future, but it will come about, there is not the slightest doubt about that. Though the evidence is that the wood supply on the goldfields may be sufficient for very many years to come, there may be possibilities, in the development of mines, that the supply may be exhausted quickly; and while we make this Wickepin Railway an agricultural line for the time being it will be easier, by running the line out in this direction now, to use the route for the future carriage of coal to the goldfields without disturbing those interests that always grow up along any railway line. The only objection I see to the line going along its present route is not in regard to the starting point, but because the line has gone too far south. If the line can be brought more to the north I think it is the duty of the Government to have it re-surveyed, taking it more to the north if it can possibly be done without entailing much additional cost. Then the people on the Wickepin area would be equally well served as if the line started from Cuballing. I carefully noted the points made by the member for Guildford as to the class of country there. The hon. member examined the country, and no doubt much of the land he traversed is not of a very inviting character, but the hon. member did not go sufficiently far to the south. There is a great deal of good country a few miles to the south that will be served by the line as at present surveyed. Another point the hon. member made was that of serving the Wickepin area from some other point on the Great Southern Railway. This area is peculiarly situated; it is almost equi-distant from Cuballing, Pingelly and Narrogin; and part of the area close to the Great Southern line is already fairly well served by that line. Therefore I think the line as now surveyed from Narrogin will serve a great many people farther out who would not be served had another route been adopted. I do not think a great injustice will be done to a large number of people, though no doubt the Wickepin area, which is an important settlement, will suffer by reason of the line going too far south.

Mr. Johnson: How do you account for men like Potts and Pauley opposing it?

Hon. F. H. PIESSE: There will always be an opposition party; there will always be the battle of routes. It is not the starting point they object to. If the line could be brought nearer to them, still retaining Narrogin as starting point, it would be acceptable to them; that is, taking it farther north, which I think should be done if it can possibly

be done. However, in the circumstances I do not feel inclined to support the motion. [*Mr. Angwin*: Do you think the route is wrong?] I believe it has gone too far to the south, but there are good reasons why it has gone to the south. It is because of the nature of the country. This line is really on a parallel to the railway we discussed last year when we were discussing routes. It is really after all the selection of the best route for the purpose of working the line, though it often causes hardship on the settlers already located, because the line is not in a position to serve them. We have that occurring every day. My idea, which I have expressed previously, is that we should have a survey of this country carried out for prospective railways in the future, settling our reserves and prospective townships, and let the people selecting work to that plan. For instance, under the present system many of the localities selected are fertile land in deep gullies, which it is difficult to approach with a railway. The easiest route any railway can follow is usually in inferior country. That was the case on the Great Southern Railway. Many of those who travelled over it condemned the country because of the uninviting character of the country adjacent to the line, and that kept the district back; and it is only now that we have settlement looking up, but it is away from the line and is not visible from the railway. It will be the same thing with these other lines. I do not think any good can be gained by farther deferring this matter. I am in sympathy with these people who are not so benefited by the route selected; but after all, there will be a great deal of new settlement. Then there is the other question of the continuation of this line in a more direct route really as an extension of the Collie-Narrogin line; and there is the other point in regard to Mr. Paterson's opinion, which I have taken irrespective of that of the other two officers. It has influenced me in giving my decision that I am not in favour of granting the prayer of this petition.

At 6.15, *the Speaker* left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Price): I wish in connection with this matter to offer a few observations, not in the nature of an exhaustive criticism upon what has been said, but to draw together some of the points that have been raised during the debate. We heard a great deal about the Government not taking responsibility for their policy, and we had the suggestion made that the question of the route of this line should be sent to some board to determine. I think if the Government were satisfied that other authoritative inquiry had been made they were in a position to make the selection of the route themselves. Some misunderstanding has evidently arisen owing to the idea which the Hon. C. A. Piesse had that he had promised at the Narrogin show that a board should inquire into this matter. Whatever his promise may have been there is not the slightest doubt as to his representations to the Premier, and that in them he simply asked for an inquiry. A letter which he then wrote to the Premier bears that out, for therein he suggests an inquiry and an inquiry only. As a result of that inquiry Mr. Stoddart, who was acting for Mr. Muir on the latter's absence in the country, and who is one of the chief men in the Engineering Surveys Department, went into the district and made an exhaustive examination. His report has been read to the House. [*Mr. Johnson*: He made what?] An exhaustive examination. I take strong objection to—I was going to say—premeditated attacks on public servants. If the information which I assume the members for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher), Guildford (Mr. Johnson) and Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) had was of any value whatever, the least those members should have done before attacking this public servant in the House was to go to the Ministerial head of the department.

Mr. Johnson: I attacked the Government and not the civil servant.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member attacked the servant, and said he had not been over the route.

Mr. Johnson: I take strong exception to those remarks. I did not attack the servant at all, but the Government. I desire the remark that I attacked the civil servant to be withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member insists, I withdraw. May I ask the hon. member if he did not say that Mr. Stoddart did not make an examination of these two routes?

Mr. Johnson: That is so; but he may have had those instructions from the Government; possibly that is what did occur.

The Premier: What is that?

Mr. Johnson: I said that possibly he did not get instructions to make an exhaustive inquiry.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We will see if that is so. I venture to say that if Mr. Stoddart did not make an examination of these two routes he was guilty of a grave dereliction of duty.

Mr. Johnson: It is not a question of examining the routes but of getting information.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I venture to think members will admit, after hearing the instructions read, that anyone who says Mr. Stoddart did not get the information will be making a very serious charge against that officer. The instructions issued to him were as follow:—

> "To the Under Secretary: Please send an officer to inquire into the relative merits of a light railway from (a) Narrogin to Wickepin; (b) Cuballing to Wickepin; the terminus being the same in both cases. The information desired is (a) settlement and number of holdings within 10 mile deviation of either side of central route and number of resident settlers; (b) cultivation within same limits; (c) area available for settlement within same limits. The officer in question must use discretion and not allow himself to be drawn into an expression of opinion favouring either side."

The desire was that he should make an absolutely impartial examination. The statement has been made by the three hon. members that this officer did not go over one of these routes. There is no getting away from that fact. In those circumstances I say it is a very grave charge to bring against an officer, and I venture to think it is a charge that if hon. members had thought the matter over they would not have brought against a man whose hands are tied and who cannot reply owing to the public service regulations. [*Mr. Johnson*: You are here to defend him.] Yes, but publicity has been given to the charge, for it has been stated that he did not carry out the instructions he received. It would have been easy for those members to see me, to inform me that the instructions had not been carried out, and ask me to investigate whether the information was accurate or not. If I had to report after investigation that the officer did not visit that route or if those members had not been satisfied that an investigation had been held, it would have been a reasonable thing to bring the matter before the House; but I think a man who desired to be fair-minded would have taken the course I suggested before throwing imputations on the officer. I have interviewed that officer and he informed me he visited both these routes. I understand one of these hon. members proposes to put the charge—for that is what it practically means—against Mr. Stoddart into writing. If he does so a full and exhaustive inquiry will be made. Let me say that Mr. Stoddart is a gentleman who has been in the Public Works Department for many years. He has carried out many onerous and important duties with credit to himself and advantage to the State. I think that the hon. member for Guildford, who has been a Minister controlling the Works Department, can bear me out in this. [*Mr. Johnson*: He is one of the most capable officers you have.] He is a most excellent and capable officer. It was due to him as an old officer of the Government that he should have received better treatment than he has obtained in this connection. In addition to the opinion of Mr. Stoddart we have that of several others. There is Mr. John Muir, the Chief Engineering Surveyor, and one of his minutes says "I am satisfied that the

line is well located and serves the district as a whole." This is his view of the case. In addition we have had the advantage of the knowledge of the Premier, who has known the district practically since his boyhood. Then there is Mr. Paterson, manager of the Agricultural Bank, who believes this route is the best one. Mr. Johnston, the Surveyor General, also endorses the route selected by the Government. In face of these authorities what do we find? We find the member for Guildford saying that the selection is a ridiculous one. [*Mr. Johnson*: So it is.] That hon. member has had an experience of the district lasting for three or four weeks, during which he made a casual detour of it. [*Mr. Johnson*: A thorough examination.] He pits his knowledge against the opinions and long experience of these men. [*Mr. Johnson*: He made no investigation at all.] I envy the hon. member. I wish I had such confidence in my own powers as to be able to stand up in my place in the House and pit my information in a matter of this sort against that of these experienced individuals. What could the Government do? It has been the custom of Governments in this country to select railway routes on the information available. There was no other course which this Government could adopt. A great deal had been made of the petitions which have been lodged in connection with this particular matter. I never have set a great deal of weight on petitions. I have had something to do sometimes with collecting signatures and perhaps that accounts for it. I know how easily people are persuaded to sign practically anything. In using the words Narrogin and Cuballing I do not use them in the sense indicated by the member for Guildford yesterday when he suggested it was simply our solicitude for these two particular towns, but used them simply as labels for the two particular routes. Either railway will not be built to serve either of those towns, but to serve the centres in the back country. I have here a map wherein the holdings of the signatories of over 100 names of the 166 in the petition favouring the Cuballing-Wickepin line are located. It will probably surprise members to know that six of them are on the western side of the Great Southern Railway and not on the eastern side at all. It passes my understanding how people whose holdings are on the western side can possibly have sufficient interest in this matter to sign a petition of any sort whatever. [*Mr. Johnson*: The holdings are all on the eastern side.] I will show the hon. member this petition and he may judge for himself. A large number of the signatories are much nearer Pingelly than Narrogin. [*Mr. Johnson*: Quite possibly.] Cuballing is I believe 21 miles from Pingelly, and a large number of these settlers are surrounding a place called Landscape, almost due east from Pingelly. If you look at the map it will be realised that those settlers will not use the new line whichever route it takes, but will still cart their products to the Great Southern railway. [*Mr. Johnson*: That is not so.] It may not be so, but these holdings are accurately located. Any member can see the map and I think anyone examining it will agree with me that a large number of the signatories of the petition will not use this line whichever way it goes. The position as it appears to me is this. Insofar as serving the settlers on the land which may in the future be brought under cultivation, there is very little to show between the routes. I have had the advantage of discussing the matter with people who know the locality intimately. There is evidently nothing between the routes, and both lines would do good service. In these circumstances, and I think this is the view of the Government also, the question has been settled and rightly settled from a purely railway point of view. A man does not want to know much about railway management to feel sure that a multiplication of junctions is not desirable. The more you concentrate your lines at one junction the better. We know this battle of the routes crops up over every proposed railway. Hon. members who have listened to the debate and the remarks of the Premier and who have heard the weighty reports which men who are well

qualified to judge have given with regard to this matter, must be satisfied and assured that there exists no further need for inquiry.

Mr. J. EWING (Collie): Last session a delay in the carrying out of the railway occurred on account of the necessity for getting farther information. I for one would be very sorry to have any farther delay this session in carrying out this very important railway. If the resolution is carried this railway will be in a different position from that of other railways which have been authorised by the House up to the present time. If there is justification for inquiry in this case, there must have been ample justification for inquiry into every other railway already authorised. I hold that the Government, not only in this case, but in almost every case that has come under my notice, have made ample inquiry as to the necessity for building lines and the routes to be taken. I know something about this particular railway, because it appeals to me in a considerable degree as a railway from Collie eventually to the goldfields. When the member for Guildford was Minister for Works he gave the matter serious consideration, and I know he went into the question thoroughly and I believe he will agree with me that at the time he was considering the question whether the line from Narrogin to Collie should be an agricultural railway line or not. I believe that question was under very serious consideration. [*Mr. Johnson*: If I had had my way that line would never have passed the Darkan.] I am glad to hear the hon. member make that statement. Evidently those who were his colleagues at that time did not agree with him and they decided this line from Narrogin should be a heavy line to carry mineral traffic and timber traffic. That line today is an accomplished fact and will be open for traffic in the very near future. Without exception it is the best railway line constructed in Western Australia today. No doubt members will visit that line and then they will see for themselves. So far the policy of this Parliament was to build a line direct from Collie to the goldfields. If that policy is to be carried out in the future, whether in the near future or the distant future, it will certainly be one of the most advantageous lines if we adopt the route agreed on by the Government from Narrogin to Wickepin. From Narrogin to Cuballing there are very steep grades, something like 1 in 60, over which it is impossible to carry heavy traffic. If the House decides to have farther inquiry into the matter, the aspect which I place before the House may be lost sight of, and if it is considered as a purely agricultural line a grave injustice will be done to the coal and timber industries in the south-west. We have to look to the future and although in the minds of members there may be no necessity for many years to come for fuel to be taken to the Eastern Goldfields, members must recognise that if those goldfields are good for all time, the necessity will come either for coal produced in this State to be used on the Eastern Goldfields or coal brought from the Eastern States. I am supported by everyone when I say I hope the time will come when we shall utilise our own products and that the goldfields will be supplied by fuel from our own State. If that is so this line will offer facilities when the time comes. The alternative route suggested by the member for Gascoyne and supported by the member for Guildford and others makes it impossible for that to eventuate.

Mr. Butcher: On a point of order, I ask that the hon. member withdraw that statement. I have never during the course of my speech advocated any route. I object to have myself misrepresented and misquoted in that way. I have not recommended any route. I spoke on the petition and I said the route selected was not one that would suit the agriculturists. I ask that inquiry should be made so that the best possible route may be selected.

Mr. EWING: I did not happen to be in the House when the hon. member spoke, and there is not much in the report in the papers. This matter was not fully stated and I did not know what

the hon. member said. I am sorry I made such a remark, I had no intention of misrepresenting him. I give the hon. member and every member credit for advocating what they think is right. Evidently the hon. member wants the line taken in a more northerly direction. As far as Cuballing is concerned, it will be a great advantage to railway development if that is settled. It would be inadvisable at the present time to carry the motion, for it would mean that during this session the line would not be authorised. I take up that position. If an inquiry is to be held, we shall find people from around the Wickepin Area, Narrogin and Cuballing agitating, and we shall find endless delays and the people will be robbed of what they are justly entitled to and that is railway communication. I believe we are perfectly safe in leaving the matter in the hands of the Government, especially when we know that to-night the Minister for Works showed what great care had been exercised in the selection of this route. Mr. Stoddart has made most ample inquiries. He is an officer to be relied on; and I believe the Premier himself has been over the route. What more information can be gained by having this particular line the subject of a special inquiry. There is no doubt about it that the people of the district were very ill-advised in interfering at the present juncture. If they want railway communication they should let the matter rest and have confidence in those who should know what is best for the State, the officers who have the responsibility of advising the Government on these questions. Outside that, the statements made are not altogether correct; because the land along the route is very excellent. Many years ago I was interested in the Collie-Narrogin route and I travelled along that route for a considerable distance and I may say the land is very good indeed. I cannot see how it is possible for the line to go in any other direction so that more valuable land would be opened up. All the land was taken up long ago, therefore people in the vicinity of this particular route have as much consideration as those along any other. What appeals to me is that those advocating the line to Cuballing or the other route are settlers who at the present time are served by the present railway, and therefore we should serve those far away from the Great Southern line. Therefore I feel it my bounden duty to register my vote against the motion.

Mr. E. C. BARNETT (Albany): Personally I have not the slightest knowledge of the relative merits of the claims of Cuballing or Narrogin as the starting point of the railway to serve the Wickepin Agricultural Area; but in view of my previously expressed conviction that the proper system is to have a public works committee to advise the State on all new railway lines or public works, I feel bound to support the proposal of the member for Gascoyne for the appointment of a select committee. If the proposal of the Government is correct, and the line proposed by them is the proper one, they have nothing to fear from the appointment of such a committee. What I wish done in these matters is to allow of the construction of a line which will serve the greatest number of settlers and be in the best interests of the State. I may state that I intend, until the Government of the day make a move toward introducing a Bill for the appointment of a railway standing committee, something on the lines of that existing in Victoria, or a public works committee on similar lines to that existing in New South Wales, to support the appointment of every select committee. [*Member*: They have a better one in Tasmania.] Whichever is the best I should like to see adopted. I consider the appointment of such committee would remove the construction of all lines from the appearance of political influence, and it would also in many cases save great errors being committed. Until such a committee is appointed, I shall in every instance support, where proposed, the appointment of a select committee to enquire into the proposals. I am prepared to allow the line to go on its merits.

The Premier: You heard the report read last night.

Mr. BARNETT: I consider the appointment of such a committee would relieve the Government of a lot of responsibility.

Mr. BUTCHER (in reply): I have just a few remarks before closing this debate, and I would first like to say that from what members have said it would appear that my principal object in moving the motion has been unobserved or evaded. The object I had in moving the motion was not to advocate any particular route. I pointed out at the commencement that to my mind the great virtue of the petition was that it advocated no route at all. In the first instance, as I have said, the Wickepin Agricultural League brought forward the necessity for railway communication and they commenced an agitation for a railway, and as I pointed out, the Narrogin or lower end of the district, and the southern portion, came in and assisted the agitation and practically cut the ground from under the feet of the Wickepin people. And the claims of the agriculturists of the Wickepin agricultural area who were recognised in the early stages of the fight to be advocating the correct route, seemed towards the end to be lost sight of and, as I said, the ground was cut from under their feet by another portion of the district. However, they still persist in their claims that a promise had been made and they ask that that promise should be fulfilled. From the debate on this motion, I really cannot say I see that the promise has been fulfilled. The Government certainly sent to the district a departmental officer, Mr. Stoddart, a gentleman I do not know, but there is no question about it that he is an excellent officer from what other members have said; of that I cannot speak from experience. The charge I made against the officer, and it turns out that I did make a charge, was contained in the particulars I received from the chairman and secretary of the farmers' league. I never went outside the limits of those particulars; therefore I believe the league are responsible for all the statements within the four corners of the papers and they are quite prepared to substantiate all they have said. They made the statement that Mr. Stoddart had not been within six or seven miles of the route which was originally promised to these people, or the route they originally advocated. I am not prepared to say whether that charge is correct or not. The House knows perfectly well that when I moved the motion I did not do so from any knowledge of the circumstances and conditions in the slightest degree. If members, prior to bringing public matters before the House, have to ascertain all particulars by their own personal observation, I take it we shall have to be in recess 365 days of the year, if possible, gaining information for the use of Parliament. So also with Ministers. When they bring in proposals we expect them to be prepared with certain information. Do they in every instance go out personally to collect that information? No. They have to depend entirely on the reports of their officers. With reference to the reports read by Ministers in this debate, to show the respective merits and demerits of the two routes, I wish to know whether the residents of the district are likely to have any knowledge of the requirements of their district, of the progress made, or of the claim they have on the Government for railway communication. Of the officer sent out to make a report those residents say distinctly:—

> "That gentleman came to Narrogin and was driven out by the agent. He certainly went over the Narrogin route, but he never went within six or seven miles of the route we suggested."

That may be right or may be incorrect, but I give it as it was given to me. The Government asked for a report. They asked Mr. Paterson also. Everyone in the country knows Mr. Paterson, and no one has more confidence in that gentleman than I. But he based his report on an experience gained some years ago. Had he inspected the district since the residents made their claim

for railway communication, I should have said he obtained his knowledge at first hand. The member for Swan (Mr. Gull), beside whom I sit, also claims to have a great knowledge of the district. I know that at one time he owned a large portion of it; but that is no guarantee that his knowledge is now of any value, for when he left the district no progress had been made, and probably all the progress which has necessitated railway communication was made within the last few years. Therefore, to ascertain what justification existed for the residents' request, it would have been necessary to send out a board to examine the country, to see on the spot the progress made, and the justification, if any, for railway communication. The same argument applies to the Surveyor General's report. No one denies that the Surveyor General is one of the best judges of land in Western Australia, and I say he is capable of giving an opinion whether the residents' claim is or is not justified. But did he within a recent date visit the district and make the necessary inquiries to see whether the developments warranted railway communication? [*The Premier*: He was there last year.] He may at a recent date have ridden over the district; but if not made with this specific object his observations are of little value for the present purpose. He may have gone there with other objects in view. Probably the Premier knows why the officer went there, but I am prepared to say he did not go to inquire into the question of this railway; and if so, did he inquire in the interest of the Wickepin agriculturists, or in some other interest? [*Mr. Monger*: Certainly he would not do that; he would inquire in the interest of the Government.] The claim of those settlers is to my mind just. It shows that the promise made to them has not been directly fulfilled, though it may have been to some extent fulfilled indirectly. Of course I am aware, as I was when I moved the motion, that there is not the slightest hope of getting it passed; but I think, when a district has a claim which has been pretty generally recognised, and when promises have been made, that claim should be allowed and those promises carried out in accordance with the original intention.

Question put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	11
Noes	..	17
Majority against	..	6

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Barnett	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Davies
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Eddy
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Ewing
Mr Holman	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Scaddan	Mr. Hudson
Mr. Underwood	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Walker	Mr. Layman
Mr. Ware	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Heitmann (*Teller*).	Mr. Monger
	Mr. N. J. Moore
	Mr. S. F. Moore
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Veryard
	Mr. Gordon (*Teller*).

Question thus negatived.

BILL—DISTRICT FIRE BRIGADES.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 1st August.

Mr. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison): As the Attorney General has consented to refer the Bill to a select committee it will not be necessary for me to speak at great length. This matter should receive the support of all sections of the comunity and both sides of the House, and I think the Minister's decision is the best possible, because the Bill would be very unsatisfactory if passed in anything like its present form. We are all seized of the fact that fire brigades legislation is at present necessary, seeing that in this State, except in Perth and Fremantle, the insurance companies do not contribute a penny to the upkeep of the fire brigade system. Considering the great benefits they derive from fire brigades, I think everyone must agree that the companies should pay a fair share of the cost of upkeep. Had the Bill been passed in anything like its present shape, in a short time another Bill would be necessary, and we should then have had three Fire Brigades Acts in this State, where-

as one Act is in opinion quite sufficient. Take for example what is perhaps the best fire brigade system in the world, that of Victoria. So far back as 1890, over 17 years ago, Victoria passed a Fire Brigades Act covering the whole colony, which Act has until the present proved exceedingly satisfactory without a solitary amendment affecting its vital principles. No system in the world can compare with that of Victoria, either for efficiency or cheapness. Victoria, under the Country Fire Brigades Board, has about 100 fire brigades, comprising 2,000 fireman, and the total cost of upkeep of the brigades is only about £11,300, or an average of some £5 10s. per fireman. I am pleased that the Attorney General has seen fit to agree to a select committee to deal with what I consider an important measure. During many years the municipalities and people in the country districts of Western Australia have been burdened with heavy taxes for the upkeep of fire brigades; yet the companies, who till last year received higher rates than they ever to my knowledge received elsewhere, did not contribute a penny towards the upkeep of any of our fire brigades, except in Perth and Fremantle. Many of the provisions of the Bill are absolutely useless, many are unfair, and there are serious omissions. First, we find there is absolutely no definition of a fire brigade. We do not know what is a brigade according to the measure. No provision is made for volunteer or for partially paid firemen; yet these are absolutely necessary in a country like Western Australia. It is impossible to to pay all firemen for work done at fires, and I look upon the fire brigades of any country in the same light as I look on the defence force. I believe in civilians' taking part in defence both against the foreign foe and against fire; and I think we have young men in Western Australia patriotic enough to give their time to defending the property and lives of the people against both these dangers. Looking farther on in the Bill we see the composition of the board. In my opinion no board will be a success in Western Australia unless the volunteer firemen have representation on it, because the firemen have to do all the work, they all put time there in at it; and if these young men put in their time in trying to protect the lives and property of the people they should have representation on the board so as to have fair and just Government. [*Mr. Daglish*: There is no representation in Victoria.] On the Victorian Country Fire Brigades Board the volunteer firemen have two representatives out of nine. [*Mr. Daglish*: But they have none on the Metropolitan Board in Victoria.] That is an entirely different system; the Metropolitan Fire Brigade in Melbourne is a fully paid brigade, working on a different system to the volunteer system. There are two boards in Victoria, the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board and the Country Fire Brigades Board. Western Australia could not stand the same fire brigade system as obtains in the metropolitan area in Melbourne, but the State adapts itself to the principle of the Country Fire Brigades Board in Victoria. In this Bill it is provided that on a board the Government should have one representative, the municipal council another, and the insurance companies another. We find farther on that two will form a quorum, and that on every occasion the chairman must be the nominee of the Government. That is unfair, especially when it is proposed that the Government should only pay one-ninth of the contributions. The Government ask for one-third of the representation but pay only one-ninth of the contributions. If the Government only pay one-ninth of the contributions they should only have one-ninth of the representation. If the Government like to pay one-third of the contributions, which I consider they should do to bring themselves into line with Victoria, they should then be entitled to one-third of the representation. The Government nominee is practically worth two representatives, providing one member for the board is not present; and through the Chairman having two votes, a deliberate and a casting vote, the Government have sole control of the Board. What would be the position of the board providing the

Government nominee did not attend? Who would have the casting vote? If one representative proposed that he should be chairman and the other voted against him, how would the board be constituted? With all the legal knowledge of the Attorney General, I think he would have to appoint a referee, a man who understood a little about fighting as well as fire brigade work. [*The Attorney General*: There would be an adjournment.] If the one moved the adjournment and the other opposed it, how could it be carried? [*The Attorney General*: They could walk away.] It is certain that if the members of the board are entitled to fees for attending they will not go away without earning their fees. The Bill has been put together in a haphazard way. It has been taken altogether from the South Australian Act of 1894, omitting a lot of the good in that Act and including a little that is entirely useless. Firemen will be entirely under the control of this board, but they are not entitled to representation. There are many other matters I could have dealt with had it been necessary, but I shall not refer to them, seeing that a select committee is to be appointed from both sides of the House. Such a select committee may take evidence throughout the State and bring in a Bill which I hope will give us in Western Australia an Act equal to that which obtains in Victoria at the present time. There are many matters to consider. It is one of the most important measures we will have to deal with, seeing that it covers the protection of life and property in Western Australia. I am entirely opposed to the principle of the Government escaping a large share of the cost of upkeep. In Victoria, where municipalities, the Government and the insurance companies pay a third each, things have gone on all right, everything has been successful, and expenses have been kept down; and after the 17 years' experience of the Act in the old State we should do well to follow the example. The same system obtains in Tasmania and New South Wales, the municipalities, the Government, and the insurance companies paying one-third each. In South Australia it is a little different, the Government contributing three-ninths, the municipal council two-ninths, and the insurance companies four-ninths. That would be better than the system the Attorney-General proposes, but in looking through the expenses incurred in Victoria, it shows how well the system has worked there. Victoria is divided into nine fire districts, and local committees are appointed for each district, but for the last few years I have noticed that not one meeting of these district committees have been held, which goes to show how well the administration of the country fire brigades in Victoria has been carried out; and this is mainly due to the fact that volunteer firemen have representatives on the board who look after the interests of the volunteers, while, of course, they also study the financial side of the question. The total expenditure in Victoria last year was £11,258, and out of that amount the allowances to each brigade, according to members, amounted to £2,613, while the allowances to secretaries amounted to £500, making a total sum of over £3,000. They also built fire stations at a cost of £828, and went in for a lot of other work. The balance was made up by administrative charges, equipping plant, etcetera. Under the present system in Kalgoorlie the brigade costs, I think I heard the Attorney General say last year, £1,400 or £1,500; I do not know the exact figures; but larger cities in Victoria are protected from fire by just as efficient brigades as the Kalgoorlie brigade for less money, and we would do well to follow the system of the Victorian country fire brigades instead of following the South Australian system. This is practically adopting the South Australian Act without any change. In South Australia they have 11 country brigades; the total cost of these brigades amounted to £9,628, almost as much as 100 brigades cost in Victoria. It only shows that under the two systems it takes considerably more in South Australia to have what is perhaps not a more efficient system than that in Victoria; and instead of follow-

ing the cheaper system, the Attorney General adopts the South Australian system. If this Bill is carried we will have a less efficient service at a greatly increased cost; and that is what we want to guard against; we want the most efficient service at the minimum of cost. At the same time I would not be one to ask firemen to put in time, to spoil much clothing and do a great deal of work for nothing. We should be able to allow the firemen a little money and a little relaxation at the expense of the Fire Brigades Board so that they will have encouragement to do the work required. I have been a fireman for many years and have never received a penny for my services; though I have spoiled many suits of clothes and many pairs of boots. Firemen work day and night on behalf of people whose houses are being burned down. I believe that in Western Australia, by following out the lines of the system in Victoria and making provision for partial payment of the volunteers, we will have as efficient a system in this State as they have in Victoria, and that we will carry it on at almost minimum cost. I am pleased that the Attorney General has looked at this question from a non-party point of view; I shall give him every possible assistance to bring down an efficient Fire Brigades Bill for Western Australia. The fact that the hon. member has agreed to refer the Bill to a select committee has taken away a lot of the criticism I intended to hurl against the measure, not because I was opposed to the passing of a Fire Brigades Act in Western Australia that would compel insurance companies to pay a fair quota towards the upkeep of brigades, but because the Bill brought down by the Attorney General was absolutely useless to the main body of fire brigades in Western Australia though it may have suited one or two. However, as the Attorney General has consented to refer the Bill to a select committee I am quite satisfied to do all I can to give every assistance to carry through this House what I hope will be just as good a Fire Brigades Act as they have in Victoria at the present time.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (in reply as mover): I do not intend to reply to the criticism—if I may apply the term—of the hon. member; because, as he states, it is my intention to move for the Bill to be referred to a select committee, which I do in the belief that it will be a proper course to pursue, and that by my having the larger experience of those with more intimate knowledge of this class of work we will be able to devolve a better Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Select Committee.

On motion by the Attorney General, Bill referred to a select committee.

Ballot proceeded with.

The Attorney General drew the attention of the Speaker to the fact that some of the ballot papers bore the name of "Brown" without any initials prefixed.

Mr. Speaker: There appear to be no initials to the name of "Brown" on certain ballot papers. As there are two members of that name in the House, it is necessary for members to put the initials on ballot papers in such cases.

The Premier: We are endeavouring to get on the committee members who have had experience of fire brigade work, and I think where initials do not appear, reference is made to Mr. H. Brown.

Select Committee appointed, consisting of Messrs. H. Brown, Holman, Scaddan, and Veryard, also Mr. Keenan as mover; with the usual powers, together with power to move from place to place; to report on the 12th September.

BILL—VACCINATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second-reading debate resumed on Bill introduced by Mr. A. J. Wilson.

Mr. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Pilbarra): Not having a great deal of scientific knowledge on vaccination, I prefer to take the opinion of those who have. Therefore I intend to oppose the second reading of this Bill. I do not intend to speak at great length, but I cannot help remarking that the great consensus of medical opinion is that vaccination is a

preventive of smallpox. Anything which will have the effect of preventing that scourge is advisable, and therefore it would be a mistake to pass the Bill before the House, or to repeal the present Act. It has been stated that doctors differ. They differ on every point under the sun, but on this particular question there is more unanimity of opinion than on any other question they deal with. The number of doctors who differ from the principle of vaccination are just sufficient to prove the rule. They are merely the exception, and it can be said that vaccination is supported by practically the whole of the medical profession. This is not a fad of to-day or yesterday, but the efficacy of the principle has held good for over one hundred years. The Act itself has been in force for 50 years. [*Mr. Bolton* : It is not in force in some countries, and it does not exist in two of the States.] It is in force in Western Australia. Vaccination has had the support of the medical profession for over one hundred years, and there is still a strong consensus of opinion among medical men in its favour. We find that during the last hundred years there have been many medical fads introduced. They are almost innumerable, but after having been in existence for a few years the strong light of applied medical science has been brought to bear upon them and wither them away. Vaccination has stood the test of over one hundred years, and I agree with Carlyle, who says that anything that stands the test of time is not a sham. I would be reluctant to pass a Bill practically repealing the Act when we have so much evidence by men who should know in favour of vaccination. We have the opinion of those who have studied the question ; but on the other hand what have we now ? What evidence has been given by the mover of this Bill ; what evidence was given last session in justification of the repealing of the Act ? Practically not one tittle of evidence has been provided in order to show that vaccination is either harmful, or non-effective. The mover of the motion did not attempt to justify the Bill. Certainly it was pointed out that in New Zealand, South Australia, and in England, an Act was in existence somewhat similar to the one proposed. Farther than that, however, we find that South Australia, the State which the hon. member has copied in this legislation, have a clause in their Act which provides that in the event of an epidemic the Government may, by proclamation, declare that the "conscience clause" shall be inoperative, and that everyone in the State can be compelled to be vaccinated, or re-vaccinated. Although South Australia is quoted as an instance in support of this Bill we find that South Australia has not gone into the matter in any way wholehearted. We find that only a week or two ago the Federal House of Representatives rejected by a very large majority—I think 30 odd to 12—an amendment deleting the compulsory vaccination clause from their Quarantine Bill ; therefore the evidence which the member has tried to bring forward, that someone else has done it, is of a very negative character. The only other evidence that I can find on looking through last year's debate was that of the member for North Fremantle, who stated that he had thoroughly studied the question and had been fined 15s. 6d. ; so the sum total of the member's knowledge of vaccination was that he had been fined 15s. 6d.

Mr. Bolton : Who said that ? That is your deduction.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : I object to the manner in which the Bill is drawn rather than to the real object of it. I contend that if vaccination is any good it should apply to everybody, and if it is no good it should apply to nobody and nobody should be compelled to be vaccinated. The member in charge of the Bill has gone to great pains to allow those who do not want to be vaccinated to get a certificate—not a medical certificate, we have that already, but a certificate from a magistrate or a justice of the peace. I want to say that although vaccination may not be a preventive of smallpox I am positive that a certificate from an elderly spectacled gentleman certainly is not. Rather than make an alteration in the present Act we should repeal it. This is called a conscience clause. I would

like to ask what has conscience to do with it anyhow? And what does the average justice of the peace know about conscience? What a great number of people often mistake for conscience is a fair-sized rat, and I feel sure of this it is not a matter of conscience at all. [*Mr. Scaddan*: Cheese.] Conscience is something that pertains—it is not an abstract quality—more to the soul, while smallpox is a virulent disease that attacks the body, and in dealing with the matter we should deal with it in a practical and not a theoretical way. There are a great many people who conscientiously object to a good few things. I dare say Bill Sykes had a conscientious objection to go to gaol, and we can generally find that when anybody does not want to do anything he can find a conscientious objection to it. My opinion is that a medical certificate from a man speaking with scientific knowledge is worth a hundred opinion, no matter how conscientious they may be. In this case we have the conscience of members against the experience of medical science for the last one hundred years, and therefore I contend a conscience clause is altogether ridiculous. Again, it has been pointed out by several who have supported the Bill that they would not repeal the Act. If we are going to allow some people not to vaccinated we must allow none to be vaccinated if they so desire. Vaccination is either good or bad. Some people have spoken to me and said, "You must not repeal the Act, because in the event of an epidemic we should not have the appliances or the lymph to vaccinate people." If those who support the Bill believe vaccination is not a preventive of smallpox then repeal the Act, but if it is a preventive of smallpox then we should all be vaccinated. I was vaccinated and so were all my mother's children, and all are alive to-day. My children have been vaccinated and I thoroughly believe in the system. I feel sure that it is vaccination in the past that has practically cleared the world of smallpox, and the present faint agitation we have had is owing to the fact that there has been practically no smallpox in this State or in this continent, and the people who are proposing to repeal the Act can have no idea what a terrible scourge smallpox is. I feel sure an epidemic of smallpox would change the minds of hundreds. I still get back to this, we should either repeal the Act or not. It seems to me that there are people who fancy that vaccination is good for somebody else and so long as you allow them to get out of it you should retain the Act to harass other people. Speaking of conscientious objections, suppose the member for North Fremantle conscientiously believes that vaccination is not a preventive of smallpox, I have as much right to have a conscientious belief that a magistrate's certificate is not a preventive, therefore the only logical conclusion to arrive at is that if we desire to do away with vaccination we should repeal the Act. In regard to the Act there are a great many things provided to be done. In Section 3 we find that the Governor shall appoint a superintendent of vaccination and such vaccinators as are required to perform the duties required by the Act. These gentlemen cannot be appointed without considerable expense, and if vaccination is no good then this money is wasted. All these positions should be abolished. Farther, we find that the registrars of births and deaths shall on the registration of the birth of a child give to the parent a notice that the child shall be vaccinated, and there are other duties pertaining to his office. According to Section 15 the registrar shall keep a book in which he shall keep all records, and farther on it is provided that an inspector shall be sent round to see that people are vaccinated. Now the proposal is that this officer shall be sent round to see that persons have magistrate's certificates, and the mover of the motion went to some considerable trouble to explain that in country districts we had been very particular in giving facility for getting these certificates. But what is the use of a certificate at all? We go to the trouble of forcing a man to look for a magistrate or a justice of the peace to get a certificate which is admitted to be absolutely useless. I contend that if the second reading of this Bill is passed it

will then be our duty so to amend it as to repeal the compulsory section of the Act.

Mr. C. H. LAYMAN (Nelson) : In rising to support this Bill so ably introduced by the member for Forrest I consider the measure will make a very wise and necessary amendment to the existing law. But I regret to find on reading the Bill that the hon member has not made the measure a little more far-reaching. The principal clause in the Bill provides for exemption for vaccination—children under certain conditions, those born after the amending Bill comes into force, and those that are born immediately before the amending Bill comes into force, but as members know there are a great number of children in the State not vaccinated whose parents are determined that they shall not be vaccinated, as well as a great many unvaccinated children whose parents would rather they should not be vaccinated and who are putting off the evil day as far as they can. These parents will not be able to avail themselves of the provision of the Bill, because the children will be over four months old when the Bill comes into force. I think the Bill should contain a clause whereby children not vaccinated and whose parents determine they shall not be vaccinated should remain legally unvaccinated. Under this Bill they will be illegally unvaccinated. I mention this at the present stage to enable the member in charge of the Bill to consider the advisability of accepting some amendment when the Bill is in Committee or accepting a new clause. There are other portions of the Bill I do not agree with. One is the exemption of declarations from stamp duty. When we recognise that the average made man would not have to sign more than a dozen declarations in his lifetime, and indeed some like the member who introduced the Bill, very few or none at all, I do not think there would be any very great hardship in paying stamp duty on declarations once a year or once in two years as the case may be, and though I know there is no man in the country so poor as not to be able to pay a small stamp duty still I think there are some people so parsimonious that they would rather sign a document which costs them nothing than render themselves liable to a fine for not having their children vaccinated, or render themselves liable to the fee of a doctor for vaccinating their children. I do not agree with the member in connection with this clause. Another reason why declarations should be stamped is that these declarations would be signed by all classes of people, and there are many illiterate persons who would have to sign them, and to the illiterate person a document sealed and stamped and signed and witnessed would appear far more important than a document with only a signature on it. There would be no hardship to anyone in paying a small stamp duty fee. I support the Bill but I want to see a few amendments inserted in the Bill when in Committee.

Mr. J. P. McLARTY (Murray) : In spite of the asertion of the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Underwood), I maintain that on the subject of vaccination doctors differ considerably; and on that account I do not think it presumptious for a layman or one outside the charmed circle to give an opinion. Besides, doctors are not always right. Within my recollection medical science has in many departments undergone a complete revolution, has completely reversed its principles. For instance, when I was a boy, a doctor who went out without his lancet would have been considered a perfect fool. If a man became sick, or was thrown from a horse, or fell in a fit, out came the lancet and he was bled. Now we are told that is entirely wrong, and that many people were killed by it. Amongst others the poet Byron is said to have been killed by bloodletting. The treatment of measles is now the exact opposite of what it was when I was a boy. I have read that before Dr. Jenner's wonderful discovery, smallpox was generally raging in some part of Great Britain, and that a large percentage of the population was marked by the disease. At the present day smallpox is seldom rife in Great Britain, and we do not see many people marked. But on the other hand, in eastern countries, people are not inocu-

lated with the virus from the cow, but with the smallpox virus itself. A person in perfectly good health is inoculated; and I am told that in Turkey one finds very few people marked by the smallpox. I dare say many of us have read of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who had her whole family and herself inoculated in Turkey. [*Mr. Underwood*: That was before Dr. Jenner's discovery.] It was. My only objection to the Bill is, if we give men a certain amount of liberty they are apt to go to extremes, and absolutely to oppose vaccination, as we may say, out of pure "cussedness." During the smallpox scare in this country there was a large percentage of deaths, and I believe the greater number was amongst those who had not been vaccinated. Some years ago, in the district where I live, the Murray, the Government issued orders that every child should be vaccinated. There was a boy who was considered a splendid subject from whom to take the virus, and a number of people was vaccinated from that boy. When he grew up to manhood he died of cancer, and his sister and his mother died of the same disease, which of course showed there was cancer in the family. And amongst those vaccinated from that boy one lady died of a fearful attack of cancer, another person has been operated on, while the remainder are living in apparent health. I have read a good deal on the subject of vaccination and have given it some thought, but it is a subject on which I have never been able to make up my mind. It may be that, like Mark Twain, I have such a tremendous quantity of mind that it takes a long time to make it up. This Bill seems to me to be harmless. It simply allows a man to make a declaration when he has conscientious objections, so that I am inclined to give the measure my support. And when we know that a conservative country like England is legislating similarly—[*Mr. Bolton*: The Act is passed] —and New South Wales and South Australia have similar measures, I think we may follow in their footsteps. A Roman emperor fathered the adage that at forty a man is either a fool or a physician. I am not prepared to say the emperor was right; but I know I have passed the fortieth mile post; and—well, I am not a physician.

Question put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	8
Majority for	..	..	11

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Barnett	Mr. H. Brown
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Brebber	Mr. Heitmann
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Hudson
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Davies	Mr. Mouger
Mr. Gregory	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Underwood (*Teller*).
Mr. Holman	
Mr. Layman	
Mr. McLarty	
Mr. S. F. Moore	
Mr. Piesse	
Mr. Scaddan	
Mr. Smith	
Mr. Veryard	
Mr. Walker	
Mr. Ware	
Mr. Gordon (*Teller*).	

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—MARINE INSURANCE.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. N. Keenan) in moving the second reading said: This is a measure of a very technical character, in respect of which I shall have to ask the patience of members in order that I may explain its principles with such details as they think it necessary I should lay before them. In the first place I would point out that our present marine insurance law is very antiquated. The Acts by which marine insurance is now regulated were passed respectively in the nineteenth year of George II. and the twentieth year of George III. And naturally the then known area in which provision had to be made for marine insurance was far more limited than that for which such provision must be made to-day. As the Bill deals entirely with marine insurance I would ask the House to grasp the fact that such insurance is a provision against marine losses; that is to say, losses arising entirely from marine adventure. The

losses that may arise from marine adventure are either those arising on the sea itself or those arising on the land in connection with marine adventure. Members will grasp the fact that perils of the sea, such as storm, piracy, and other dangers enumerated in the Bill, are natural incidents to a Bill of this character. But it is necessary also to provide against contingent risks which arise when a vessel is in harbour, when it is tied up to a jetty, when it is in dry dock, or in some other way attached to the soil. One of the illustrations given in the Bill is when a ship is in course of construction. Every lawful marine adventure may be made the subject-matter of an insurance policy under this Bill; and in particular a marine adventure exists when any ship, goods, or other movables are exposed to maritime perils, and where the party concerned wishes to take out an insurance policy or in some other form to guarantee himself against loss. The earning or acquisition of freight, passage money, or commission, or where any liability to a third party may be incurred by the owner of or other person interested in insurable property, come within the definition of "marine adventure." Maritime perils are those incidental to the navigation of the seas, and are defined in the Bill as "perils of the seas, fire, war perils, pirates, rovers, thieves, captures, seizures, restraints, detainments of princes and peoples, jettisons, barratry and other perils either of the like kind or which may be designated by the policy." In order that the Bill may not be used for speculative purposes, we provide that every contract for marine insurance by way of gaming or wagering is void; and we set out that a contract of marine insurance is deemed to be a gaming contract where the assured has not an insurable interest as defined by this Bill, or where the policy is made "interest or no interest," or "without farther proof of interest than the policy itself." These provisions are necessary, because, unfortunately, almost every transaction in our mercantile life is made use of for the purpose of gaming. Hon. members are aware that in the wheat mart the supply of wheat, a most necessary article of human consumption, is also made the greatest gamble almost in the world to-day. Therefore, we have taken the necessary precaution in this Bill to make void any policy that is a gaming policy. [*Mr. Walker*: That is so by the law already.] This Bill relates not only to our State, because maritime perils must be common to the world. While one is dealing with matters within the confines of one's own State it is easy to say that our law makes the contract unlawful; but if we wish our merchants to be protected beyond the actual boundaries of the State it is necessary to have this provision; we have to provide that a gaming contract, where it relates to marine insurance, is void. What is insurable interest? because an essential condition that it is not a gaming contract is that the party entering into the contract has an insurable interest. We find the definition in Clause 6:—

> "A person is interested in a marine adventure where he stands in any legal or equitable relation to the adventure or to any insurable property at risk therein, in consequence of which he may benefit by the safety or due arrival of insurable property."

That is an easily ascertained position, and unless you stand in that position you are not entitled to obtain a policy which may be a binding policy under this Bill. The insured must have an interest in the subject matter either at the time of the loss or, under special circumstances which we have inserted in the clause, he may have acquired his interest afterwards, unless at the time of effecting the contract of insurance the assured was aware of the loss, and the insurer was not. Although it may occur at first sight that an insurance policy should be entered into before the loss, it may be entered into in ignorance of the loss, and the party is on the same footing of knowledge as the party granting the insurance. Therefore the contract is one binding and equitable and should be enforced. We also give the right of re-insurance. Re-insurance is really a method by which the party entering into a contract indemnifies himself against loss by getting another party

to take the whole or portion of the liability. We set out very clearly what the quantum of interest is, besides pointing out what is the interest that must attach. We point out:—

"Where the subject matter is mortgaged, the mortgagor has an insurable interest in the full value thereof, and the mortgagee has an insurable interest in respect of any sum due or to become due under the mortgage."

That is to say, the original owner of a ship who insures it has an insurable interest in the full value, but the mortgagee only in respect of any sum he would have to pay under the contract of insurance. Therefore, on re-insuring he cannot reinsure for a greater sum than the liability he has himself taken on in the first instance. Insurable value is set out at length and in definite terms in Clause 17. It is pointed out:—

"In insurance on ship, the insurable value is the value at the commencement of the risk, of the ship, including her outfit, provisions, and stores for the officers and crew, money advanced for seamen's wages, and other disbursements (if any) incurred to make the ship fit for the voyage or adventure contemplated by the policy, plus the charges of insurance upon the whole."

That is to say, the measure of insurance upon the ship at the time the policy is entered into is the value at the commencement of the risk. We also provide:—

"The insurable value, in the case of a steamship, includes also the machinery, boilers, and coals and engine stores if owned by the assured, and in the case of a ship engaged in a special trade, the ordinary fittings requisite for that trade."

Besides insurance on the ship we can have insurance on the freight, and the measure of insurable value in that case is determined by the gross amount of the freight. The clause says:—

"In insurance on freight, whether paid in advance or otherwise, the insurable value is the gross amount of the freight at the risk of the assured, plus the charges of insurance."

In the case of goods or merchandise, the clause provides

"In insurance on goods or merchandise, the insurable value is the prime cost of the property insured, plus the expenses of and incidental to shipping and the charges of insurance upon the whole."

In insurance on any other subject-matter, the insurable value is the amount at the risk of the assured when the policy attaches, plus the charges of insurance. In all policies of this nature it has been found wise and prudent to insist on the utmost good faith between the parties. It is perfectly clear that without that provision we should in a large measure provide an open door for deceit and fraud, so that special provision is made that a contract under this Bill is based on utmost good faith. If that be not observed by either party the contract may be avoided by either party. In order to enforce this provision of good faith it is provided that:—

"The assured must disclose to the insurer, before the contract is concluded, every material circumstance which is known to the assured, and the assured is deemed to know every circumstance which, in the ordinary course of business, ought to be known by him. If the assured fails to make such disclosure, the insurer may avoid the contract."

But in order that this may not be taken advantage of unduly by the party making the insurance, provision is made that in the absence of inquiry certain circumstances need not be disclosed. If the insurer chooses to make inquiry he is entitled to a full disclosure, but in the absence of any direct inquiry the following circumstances need not be disclosed, namely:—

"(*a.*) Any circumstance which diminishes the risk; (*b.*) Any circumstance which is known or presumed to be known to the insurer. The insurer is presumed to know matters of common notoriety or knowledge, and matters which an insurer in the ordinary course of his business, as such, ought to know; (*c.*) Any circumstance as to which information is waived by the insurer; (*d.*) Any circumstance which it is superfluous to

disclose by reason of an express or implied warranty."

A contract of marine insurance is inadmissible in evidence unless it is embodied in a marine policy in acordance with this Bill. The policy may be executed and issued either at the time when the contract is concluded, or afterwards. That is in Clause 23. We then set out what a marine policy must specify. Where the contract is to insure the subject-matter from one place to another, it is called a "voyage policy." Besides this we also have a "time policy," a policy which is made for any time not exceeding twelve months; and any "time policy" may contain what is known as a "continuation clause," under which it is deemed that on the expiry of the original contract a farther contract is entered into which is binding on the parties. Besides the "voyage policy" and the "time policy," it is necessary to point out that a policy may be either a "valued" or an "unvalued" policy. The "valued policy" is one which specifies the agreed value of the subject-matter insured (Clause 28), and in the absence of fraud the value fixed by the policy is, as between the insurer and assured, conclusive of the insurable value of the subject intended to be insured, whether the loss be total or partial. So that, whether it be a "voyage policy" or a "time policy," it comes under the distinction of what is a "valued policy." It is conclusive as between the parties as to the amount to be paid by the insurer on the loss of the property covered by the insurance. There is also a form of "unvalued policy," which is one that does not specify the value of the subject-matter insured, but, subject to the limit of the sum insured, leaves the insurable value to be subsequently ascertained in the manner set out in the Bill. If the value is non-ascertained, the insurer is liable to the full value of the subject-matter, and that is to be determined after the loss. An "unvalued policy" is one that is often resorted to where it is impossible for the insurer, who wishes to indemnify himself against the risk, to ascertain the exact value. He takes an outside figure and pays a premium which may be out of proportion to the value of the subject-matter, and in the case of loss he receives not the full figure, but the figure which actually represents the value of the subject-matter insured. A "floating policy" (Clause 30) is one which describes the insurance in general terms and leaves the name of the ship, or ships, and other particulars to be defined by subsequent declaration, which may be endorsed on the policy or in customary manner. Unless the policy otherwise provides, the declarations must be made in the order of dispatch or shipment. This form is convenient to merchants dealing with various parts of the world, and which has been found in the development of trade to be largely resorted to. Therefore it is properly included in a Bill of this character. In the schedule to this Bill there is a form of policy, but the insurer is not tied down to form except to this extent, that he must follow the form. Provision is made for cases where two or more policies are taken out in respect of the same subject-matter—that is to say, in cases of double insurance—to prevent fraud by the same party insuring with two or three insurers and recovering from all of them the full amount of the risk. The provisions are very much the same as those which apply in the case of fire; that is to say, the insured party cannot receive more than the value of the subject-matter insured and the total paid is proportioned between the parties with whom he has entered into the several contracts. I do not propose to go into the portions of the Bill dealing with warranties. Largely they arise from circumstances over which we hope not to be called upon to exercise any control or in regard to which we hope not to be called upon to have any experience. Warranty of neutrality, for instance, is: Where a ship is expressly warranted neutral, there is an implied condition that the property shall be of a neutral character; that she shall be properly documented—that is to say, she shall carry the necessary papers to establish her neutrality. Those are circumstances that cover foreign relations—relations between nations deal-

ing with one another. It deals with the rules governing transit by sea. There are no conditions that are likely to arise in the case of our State. There is also of course implied in every "voyage policy" the warranty that the ship is seaworthy, that she is perfectly fitted out for the particular adventure insured; and when the ship lies in port there is an implied warranty that she shall at the commencement of the risk be reasonably fit to encounter the ordinary perils of the port (Clause 40). In regard to a voyage policy, there is an implied warranty that the ship shall commence the voyage within a reasonable period, and if not commenced within such time the insurer may avoid the contract. There is also a condition that the risk does not attach where the ship, without lawful excuse, deviates from the voyage contemplated in the policy. In that case the policy becomes void and such deviation is defined as one in fact whatever the intention may be; that is, what the insurer is really called upon and bound under the Bill to answer for is in connection with the transit of goods from port to port; but if the ship intentionally or not deviates from the destination contemplated by the policy it is clear that to hold the insurers liable would be to ask them to do something more than was agreed to. The policy is also void if the ship goes into a port other than that named in the policy. This must be provided, although this action is often taken where companies give the right to the master of a ship to call at any port, for instance, such as any port in Australia, and land his merchandise there. We make provision that where the deviation is due to circumstances entirely beyond the control of the master or the employer, as the result of a storm, the breaking down of machinery, or some inevitable cause such as that, which results in the master having to seek the shelter of the nearest port, the policy shall not be declared void. There is also proper provision for the assignment of a policy. That is necessary because the subject matter which the policy covers changes hands and a man who has an interest to-day in the subject matter of the policy may have none to-morrow, and it is necessary to make ample provision for the transfer of the policy. I do not propose to go farther into the details of this Bill. It has been passed in its present form by the British House of Commons, and we may feel sure that in whatever other way we may excel that House, it certainly excels us in its knowledge of mercantile law. The measure only passed through the British House of Commons after the Board of Trade had fully investigated it and a select committee had taken the evidence of the experts available. [Mr. *Hudson*: What is the necessity for its introduction here?] I explained at the beginning of my speech that the present legislation is most inadequate, for the law is almost a relic of the past. It is entirely out of date and does not provide for the necessities of modern mercantile life.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.35 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.